

It's An Ad, Ad, Ad, Ad World

The average American consumer is bombarded with hundreds of commercial messages a day, and some experts claim that the average child sees and hears 100,000 pitches before being old enough to attend school. Sometimes it seems that, in these messages, both the sponsors and the advertising agencies have abandoned the struggle to communicate clearly, washing their hands of sense and meaning.

On a paper placemat in a Massachusetts restaurant appeared this advertising atrocity:

NEWBURY STREET COIFFURE AFFORDABLE

An Alternative to Looking Good

After tittering and scratching our heads for a while, we can reconstruct what happened in the framing of this cacophonous come-on. Apparently, the good folks at Newbury Street Coiffure meant to proclaim that their affordable prices afforded an alternative *for* looking good. But what came out was the message "Come to us and we'll throw gunk on your hair and pull some of it out. And we'll charge you very little to do it!"

As the following classified classics will demonstrate, there are often more laughs on the advertising and classified pages than you can find in the cartoons and comic strips:

- Lost: small apricot poodle. Reward. Neutered. Like one of the family.
- A superb and inexpensive restaurant. Fine foods expertly served by waitresses in appetizing forms.
- Dinner Special - Turkey \$2.35; Chicken or Beef \$2.25; Children \$2.00.
- For sale: antique desk suitable for lady with thick legs and large drawers.
- For sale: a quilted high chair that can be made into a table, pottie chair, rocking horse, refrigerator, spring coat,



*Our Bikinis
are
Exciting
They are
simply
The Tops!*

size 8 and fur collar.

- Four-poster bed, 101 years old. Perfect for antique lover.
- Now is your chance to have your ears pierced and get an extra pair to take home, too!
- Wanted: 50 girls for stripping machine operators in factory.
- Wanted: Unmarried girls to pick fresh fruit and produce at night.
- We do not tear your clothing with machinery. We do it carefully by hand.
- No matter what your topcoat is made of, this miracle spray will make it really repellent.
- For Sale. Three canaries of undermined sex.
- For Sale - Eight puppies from a German Shepherd and an Alaskan Husky.
- Creative daily specials, including select offerings of beef, fowl, fresh vegetables, salads, quiche.
- 7 ounces of choice sirloin steak, boiled to your likeness and smothered with golden fried onion rings.
- Great Dames for sale.
- Have several very old dresses from grandmother in beautiful condition.
- Tired of cleaning yourself? Let me do it.
- 20 dozen bottles of excellent Old Tawny Port, sold to pay for charges, the owner having been lost sight of, and bottled by us last year.
- Dog for sale: eats anything and is fond of children.
- Vacation Special: have your home exterminated.
- If you think you've seen everything in Paris, visit the Pere Lachasis Cemetery. It boasts such immortals as Moliere, Jean de la Fontain, and Chopin.
- Mt. Kilimanjaro, the breathtaking backdrop for the Serena Lodge. Swim in the lovely pool while you drink it all in.

- The hotel has bowling alleys, tennis courts, comfortable beds, and other athletic facilities.
- Get rid of aunts: Zap does the job in 24 hours.
- Toaster. A gift that every member of the family appreciates. Automatically burns toast.
- Sheer stockings. Designed for fancy dress, but so serviceable that lots of women wear nothing else.
- Stock up and save. Limit: one.
- Save regularly in our bank. You'll never regret it.
- We build bodies that last a lifetime.
- Offer expires December 31 or while supplies last.
- This is the model home for your future. It was panned by *Better Homes and Gardens*.
- For Sale - Diamonds \$20; microscopes \$15.
- For Rent: 6-room hated apartment.
- Man, honest. Will take anything.
- Wanted: chambermaid in rectory. Love in, \$200 a month. References required.
- Wanted: Part-time married girls for soda fountain in sandwich shop.
- Man wanted to work in dynamite factory. Must be willing to travel.
- Used Cars: Why go elsewhere to be cheated? Come here first!
- Christmas tag-sale. Handmade gifts for the hard-to-find person.
- Modular Sofas. Only \$299. For rest or fore play.
- Wanted: Hair-cutter. Excellent growth potential.
- Wanted. Man to take care of cow that does not smoke or drink.
- 3-year-old teacher needed for pre-school. Experience preferred.
- Our experienced Mom will care for your child. Fenced

yard, meals, and snacks included.

- Our bikinis are exciting. They are simply the tops.
- Auto Repair Service. Free pick-up and delivery. Try us once, you'll never go anywhere again.
- See ladies blouses. 50% off!
- Holcross pullets. Starting to lay Betty Clayton, Granite 5-6204.
- Wanted: Preparer of food. Must be dependable, like the food business, and be willing to get hands dirty.
- Illiterate? Write today for free help.
- Girl wanted to assist magician in cutting-off-head illusion. Blue Cross and salary.
- Wanted. Widower with school-age children requires person to assume general housekeeping duties. Must be capable of contributing to growth of family.
- Mixing bowl set designed to please a cook with round bottom for efficient beating.
- Mother's helper - peasant working conditions.
- Semi-Annual after Christmas Sale.
- And now, the Superstore—unequaled in size, unmatched in variety, unrivaled inconvenience.
- We will oil your sewing machine and adjust tension in your home for \$1.00.

And these beauties from the radio:

- Ladies and gentlemen, now you can have a bikini for a ridiculous figure.
- Be with us again next Saturday at 10 p.m. for "High Fidelity," designed to help music lovers increase their reproduction.
- When you are thirsty, try 7-Up, the refreshing drink in the green bottle with the big 7 on it and *u-p* after.
- Tune in next week for another series of classical music programs with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Signs of The Times

On October 13, 1944, the *Durham* (N.C.) *Sun* reported that a Durhamite had been brought before a Judge Wilson in traffic court for having parked his car on a restricted street right in front of a sign that read "No Stopping."

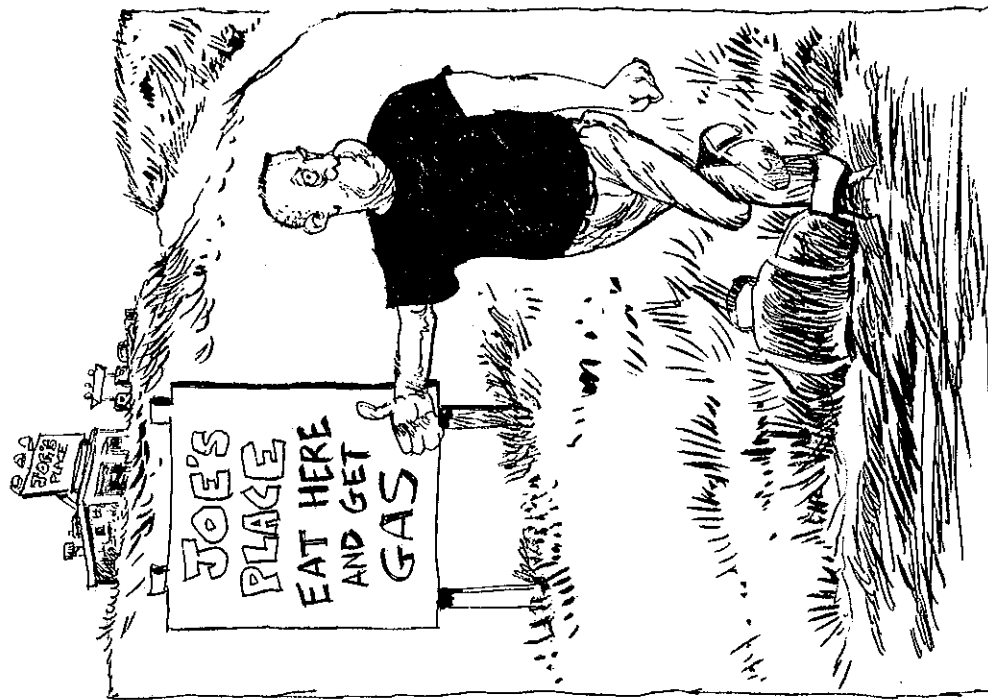
Rather than pleading guilty, the defendant argued that the missing letter in the sign meant that he had not violated the letter of the law. Brandishing a Webster's dictionary, he noted that *stopping* means "extracting ore from a stope or, loosely, underground."

"Your Honor," said the man, "I am a law-abiding citizen, and I didn't extract any ore from the area of the sign. I move that the case be dismissed."

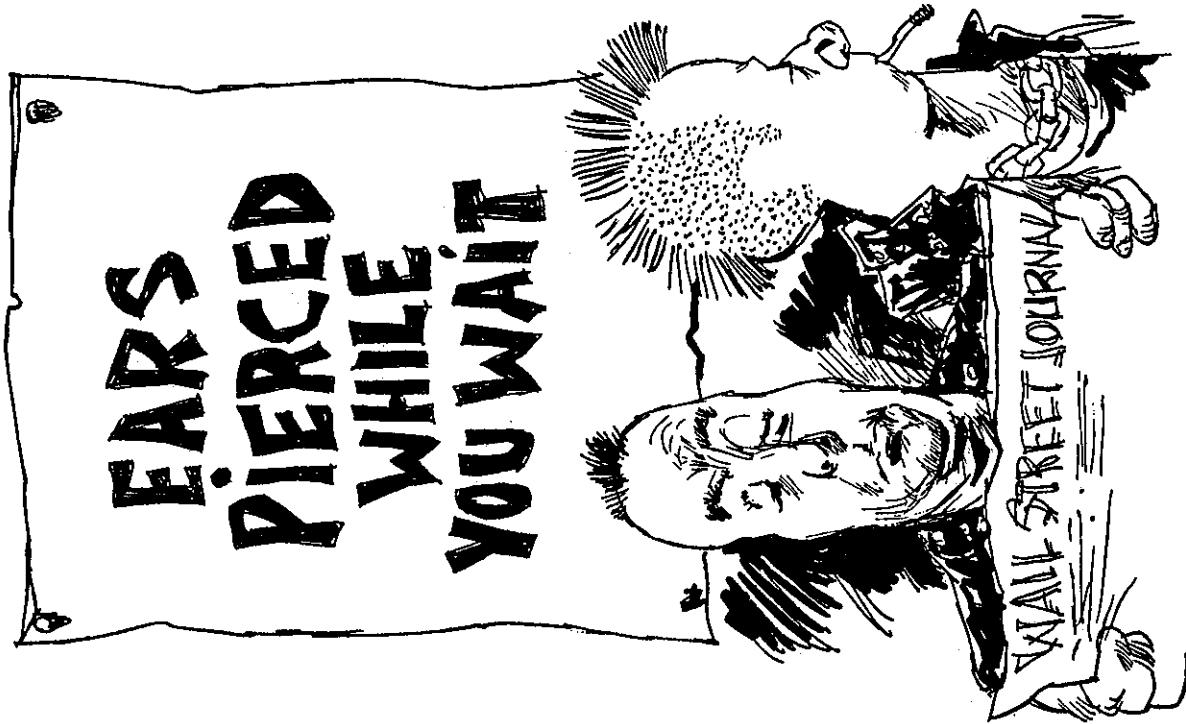
Acknowledging that the defendant hadn't done any illegal mining, the judge declared the man not guilty and commented, "Since this is Friday the 13th, anything can happen, so I'll turn you loose."

"No Stopping" is a blunderful example of the suspect signs and botched billboards that dot the American landscape. Here are some other signs that need to be re-signed:

- *At restaurant-gas stations throughout the nation:* Eat here and get gas.
- *At a Santa Fe gas station:* We will sell gasoline to anyone in a glass container.
- *In a New Hampshire jewelry store:* Ears pierced while you wait.
- *In a New York restaurant:* Customers who consider our waitresses uncivil ought to see the manager.
- *In a Michigan restaurant:* The early bird gets the worm! Special shoppers' luncheon before 11 a.m.
- *On a delicatessen wall:* Our best is none too good.
- *On the wall of a Baltimore estate:* Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. — Sisters of Mercy.



- *On a long-established New Mexico dry cleaning store:* Thirty-eight years on the same spot.
- *In a Los Angeles dance hall:* Good clean dancing every night but Sunday.
- *On a movie theater:* Children's matinee today. Adults not admitted unless with child.
- *In a Florida maternity ward:* No children allowed.
- *In a New York drugstore:* We dispense with accuracy.
- *On a New York loft building:* Wanted: Woman to sew buttons on the fourth floor.
- *In a New Hampshire medical building:* Martin Diabetes Professional Ass.
- *In the offices of a loan company:* Ask about our plans for owning your home.
- *In a New York medical building:* Mental health prevention center.
- *In a toy department:* Five Santa Clauses. No waiting.
- *On a New York convalescent home:* For the sick and tired of the Episcopal church.
- *On a Maine shop:* Our motto is to give our customers the lowest possible prices and workmanship.
- *At a number of military bases:* Restricted to unauthorized personnel.
- *In a number of parking areas:* Violators will be enforced and Trepassers will be violated.
- *On a display of "I Love You Only" Valentine cards:* Now available in multi-packs.
- *In the window of a Kentucky appliance store:* Don't kill your wife. Let our washing machines do the dirty work.
- *In a funeral parlor:* Ask about our layaway plan.
- *On a window of a New Hampshire hamburger restaurant:* Yes, we are open. Sorry for the inconvenience.
- *In a clothing store:* Wonderful bargains for men with 16 and 17 necks.



- *In a Tacoma, Washington, men's clothing store:* 15 men's wool suits — \$10.00 — They won't last an hour!
- *On an Indiana shopping mall marquee:* Archery tournament. Ears pierced.
- *In the bathrooms of a large apartment building:* When taking showers, please leave the bathroom door ajar. This will prevent the plaster from peeling.
- *Outside a country shop:* We buy junk and sell antiques.
- *On a North Carolina highway:* EAT 300 FEET
- *On an Ohio highway:* Drive Slower When Wet.
- *On a New Hampshire highway:* You are speeding when flashing.
- *On a Pennsylvania highway:* Drive carefully: Auto accidents kill most people from 15 to 19.
- *In downtown Boston:* Callahan Tunnel/No. End.
- *In the window of an Oregon general store:* Why go elsewhere to be cheated, when you can come here?
- *In a Massachusetts parking area reserved for bird-watchers:* Parking for birds only.
- *In a Maine restaurant:* Open seven days a week and weekends.
- *In a New Jersey restaurant:* Open 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. midnight.
- *In front of a New Hampshire restaurant:* Now serving live lobsters.
- *In front of a New Hampshire store:* Endurable floors.
- *On a radiator repair garage:* Best place to take a leak.

Before I sign off, I offer some poster and billboard messages containing the kind of goofy prose that laughs in the face of logic:

- *On a movie marquee:* Now Playing:
ADAM AND EVE
with a cast of thousands!

- *In the vestry of a New England church:* Will the last person to leave please see that the perpetual light is extinguished.
 - *In a Pennsylvania cemetery:* Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves.
 - *On a roller coaster:* Watch your head.
 - *On a New Hampshire road:*
Will build to suit
Emory A. Tuttle
 - *On the grounds of a private school:* No trespassing without permission.
 - *In a library:* Blotter paper will no longer be available until the public stops taking it away.
 - *On a Tennessee highway:* Take notice: when this sign is under water, this road is impassable.
 - *Similarly, in front of a New Hampshire car wash:* If you can't read this, it's time you wash your car.
- And somewhere in England in an open field otherwise untouched by human presence is a sign that reads: "Do not throw stones at this sign."

Welfare Bloopers Fare Well

The following excerpts are drawn from letters written by citizens applying for payments from a state welfare agency. Some readers might question my taste in using these applications. My answer is that I am an equal opportunity collector, and I believe that all members of our society should have the chance to contribute bloopers to *Anguished English*:

- I am glad to report that my husband who is missing is dead.
- In accordance with your instructions I have given birth to twins in the enclosed envelope.
- I am very much annoyed to find you have branded my son illiterate. This is a dirty lie as I was married a week before he was born.
- Unless I get my money soon, I will be forced to live an immortal life.
- You have changed my little boy to a girl. Will this make a difference?
- I am forwarding my marriage certificate and three children, one of which is a mistake as you can see.
- I cannot get sick pay. I have six children. Can you tell me why?
- I am writing the Welfare Department to say that my baby was born two years old. When do I get my money?
- Mrs. Jones has not had any clothes for a year and has been visited regularly by the clergy.
- Please find for certain if my husband is dead. The man I am now living with can't eat or do anything till he knows.
- In answer to your letter, I have given birth to a boy weighing 10 pounds. I hope this is satisfactory.
- I am forwarding my marriage certificate and six children I have on half a sheet of paper.
- My husband got his project cut off two weeks ago and I

Two-Headed Headlines

One of comedian Will Rogers' favorite remarks was "All I know is what I read in the papers." For many busy people, all they know is what they read in the headlines. The bold messages entice readers to purchase copies from the news stands and, if there is time, to dive more deeply into a story.

Behind every newspaper headline lurks a newspaper deadline. The men and women who compose headlines work within pressing restrictions of time and space. They must compact large-size print into narrow column widths, and their brief messages must clearly state the theme of each story, keep words intact, be attractive to the eye, and catch the reader's attention. On top of that, each headline must be written in a fraction of the time thought humanly possible.

No wonder that, on occasion, editors get caught with their headlines down, and, exposed to as many as several million readers, the bold-face botch becomes a red-face result.

Some of the best two-headed headlines are those in which an inadvertent pun lifts the message from the blandly literal to the sublimely absurd:

GRANDMOTHER OF EIGHT
MAKES HOLE IN ONE

DEAF MUTE GETS NEW HEARING IN KILLING

DEFENDANT'S SPEECH ENDS IN LONG SENTENCE

ASBESTOS SUIT PRESSED

DOCTOR TESTIFIES IN HORSE SUIT

COMPLAINTS ABOUT NBA REFEREES
GROWING UGLY



GRANDMOTHER OF EIGHT
MAKES HOLE IN ONE

POLICE BEGIN CAMPAIGN TO RUN DOWN
JAYWALKERS

FLAMING TOILET SEAT CAUSES
EVACUATION AT HIGH SCHOOL

HOUSE PASSES GAS
TAX ONTO SENATE

POLICE DISCOVER CRACK IN AUSTRALIA

TUNA BITING OFF WASHINGTON COAST

STIFF OPPOSITION EXPECTED
TO CASKETLESS FUNERAL PLAN

MEN RECOMMEND MORE CLUBS FOR WIVES

MANY ANTIQUES SEEN AT D.A.R. MEETING

IKE SAYS NIXON CAN'T STAND PAT

TWO CONVICTS EVADE NOOSE; JURY HUNG

U.S. AUDIT FINDS FUNDS FOR YOUTH MISSPENT

CHINESE APEMAN DATED

MAN HELD OVER GIANT L.A. BRUSH FIRE

TRAFFIC DEAD RISE SLOWLY

WILLIAM KELLY, 87, WAS FED SECRETARY

ALL-STARS TURN ON SPARSE CROWD

NATION'S HUNGRY ATTACK MEESE

U'S FOOD SERVICE
FEEDS THOUSANDS,
GROSSES MILLIONS

COLLEGIANS ARE TURNING TO VEGETABLES

MILK DRINKERS ARE TURNING TO POWDER

HALF-MILLION ITALIAN WOMEN SEEN ON PILL

SAFETY EXPERTS SAY SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS
SHOULD BE BELTED

SCIENTISTS TO HAVE FORD'S EAR

S. FLORIDA ILLEGAL ALIENS CUT IN HALF
BY NEW LAW

10 REVOLTING OFFICERS EXECUTED

QUARTER OF A MILLION CHINESE LIVE ON WATER

DRUNK GETS NINE MONTHS IN VIOLIN CASE

COUNTY OFFICIALS TO TALK RUBBISH

JUDGE ACTS TO REOPEN THEATER

MAN HELD IN MIAMI AFTER SHOOTING BEE

SURVIVOR OF SIAMESE TWINS JOINS PARENTS

CARTER PLANS SWELL DEFICIT

CARTER TICKS OFF BLACK HELP

CARRIBEAN ISLANDS DRIFT TO LEFT

THUGS EAT THEN ROB PROPRIETOR

ROBBER HOLDS UP ALBERT'S HOSIERY

NEW HOUSING FOR ELDERLY NOT YET DEAD

TOWN TO DROP SCHOOL BUS
WHEN OVERPASS IS READY

FARMER BILL DIES IN HOUSE

KISSINGER ALLEGEDLY FORGES MIDEAST PACT

GENETIC ENGINEERING SPLITS SCIENTISTS

IRAQI HEAD SEEKS ARMS

SALESMAN SAYS HE LEFT
4 LARGE RINGS IN MALDEN BATHTUB

HERSHEY BARS PROTEST

MEAT HEAD FIGHTS HIKE IN MINIMUM PAY

NEW AUTOS TO HIT 5 MILLION

When a newspaper goes out wearing the wrong banners, its messages can become unwittingly suggestive:

QUEEN MARY HAVING BOTTOM SCRAPED

IS THERE A RING OF DEBRIS AROUND URANUS?

HENSHAW OFFERS RARE OPPORTUNITY
TO GOOSE HUNTERS

CONNIE TIED, NUDE
POLICEMAN TESTIFIES

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT CALLED
MORE BROAD-BASED



HERSHEY BARS PROTEST

ANTIQUE STRIPPER TO DISPLAY WARES AT STORE

STUD TIRES OUT

PROSTITUTES APPEAL TO POPE

CITY MAY IMPOSE MANDATORY TIME
FOR PROSTITUTION

SPLIT REARS IN FARMERS MOVEMENT

MRS. RYDELL'S BUST UNVEILED
AT NEARBY SCHOOL

JAIL GUARD PROBE IN PRISON SEX

GROVER MAN DRAWS PRISON TERM,
FINE FOR SEX ACTS

PANDA MATING FAILS;
VETERINARIAN TAKES OVER

KIDS' PAJAMAS TO BE REMOVED BY WOOLWORTH

NUNS DROP SUIT; BISHOPS AGREE TO AID THEM

PLANNED PARENTHOOD LOOKING
FOR VOLUNTEERS

N.J. JUDGE TO RULE ON NUDE BEACH

CHILD'S STOOL GREAT FOR USE IN GARDEN

IDAHO GROUP ORGANIZES TO HELP
SERVICE WIDOWS

COLUMNIST GETS UROLOGIST IN TROUBLE
WITH HIS PEERS

DR. RUTH TO TALK ABOUT SEX
WITH NEWSPAPER EDITORS

PASTOR AGHAST AT FIRST LADY SEX POSITION

MRS. CORSON'S SEAT UP FOR GRABS

SOVIET VIRGIN LANDS SHORT OF GOAL AGAIN

LOCAL MAN HAS LONGEST HORNS IN TEXAS

CAUSE OF AIDS FOUND — SCIENTISTS

STERILIZATION SOLVES PROBLEMS
FOR PETS, OWNERS

ORGAN FESTIVAL ENDS IN SMASHING CLIMAX

Sometimes the galley gaffe issues from a confusion in
grammar:

BRITISH LEFT WAFFLES ON FALKLAND ISLANDS

LUNG CANCER IN WOMEN MUSHROOMS

CITY PACTS FIGHT BOILS

EYE DROPS OFF SHELF

TEACHER STRIKES IDLE KIDS

REAGAN WINS ON BUDGET,
BUT MORE LIES AHEAD

SWAZI KING, 2 SONS POISON SUSPECTS

DEALERS WILL HEAR CAR TALK FRIDAY NOON

SQUAD HELPS DOG BITE VICTIM

MONDALE'S OFFENSIVE LOOKS HARD TO BEAT

AMERICAN SHIPS HEAD TO LIBYA

LAWYERS GIVE POOR FREE LEGAL ADVICE

LIFE MEANS CARING FOR HOSPITAL DIRECTOR

HORNETS WILL ACCENT THROWING GAME IN '81

SHOT OFF WOMAN'S LEG HELPS NICKLAUS TO 66

MAN EATING PIRANHA MISTAKENLY SOLD
AS PET FISH

ENRAGED COW INJURES FARMER WITH AX

ADMITS SHOOTING HUSBAND FROM STAND
DURING TRIAL

LAWMEN FROM MEXICO BARBECUE GUESTS

PLANE TOO CLOSE TO GROUND,
CRASH PROBE TOLD

MINERS REFUSE TO WORK AFTER DEATH

JUVENILE COURT TO TRY SHOOTING DEFENDANT

FUND SET UP FOR BEATING VICTIM'S KIN

STOLEN PAINTING FOUND BY TREE

FINE YOUNG MAN CONVICTED OF MISDEMEANOR

HITLER, NAZI PAPERS FOUND IN ATTIC

SILENT TEAMSTER BOSS GETS UNUSUAL
PUNISHMENT, LAWYER

TWO SOVIET SHIPS COLLIDE, ONE DIES

2 SISTERS REUNITED AFTER 18 YEARS
IN CHECKOUT COUNTER

KILLER SENTENCED TO DIE FOR SECOND TIME
IN 10 YEARS

COMMUTER TAX ON NEW YORKERS
KILLED IN NEW JERSEY

Occasionally, a deformed headline takes on a meaning
that is exactly the opposite of the one intended:

NEVER WITHHOLD HERPES INFECTION
FROM LOVED ONE

CANCER SOCIETY HONORS MARLBORO MAN

NICARAGUA SETS GOAL TO WIPE OUT LITERACY

DRUNKEN DRIVERS PAID \$1,000 IN '84

AUTOS KILLING 110 A DAY
LET'S RESOLVE TO DO BETTER

20-YEAR FRIENDSHIP ENDS AT ALTAR

And sometimes the headline illuminates the painfully
obvious:

WAR DIMS HOPE FOR PEACE

IF STRIKE ISN'T SETTLED QUICKLY,
IT MAY LAST A WHILE

SMOKERS ARE PRODUCTIVE, BUT DEATH
CUTS EFFICIENCY

COLD WAVE LINKED TO TEMPERATURES

HALF OF U.S. HIGH SCHOOLS
REQUIRE SOME STUDY
FOR GRADUATION

CHILD'S DEATH RUINS COUPLE'S HOLIDAY

BLIND WOMAN GETS NEW KIDNEY
FROM DAD SHE HASN'T SEEN IN YEARS

SCENT FOUL PLAY
IN DEATH OF MAN
FOUND BOUND AND HANGED

MAN IS FATALLY SLAIN

ENFIELD COUPLE SLAIN;
POLICE SUSPECT HOMICIDE

SOMETHING WENT WRONG IN JET CRASH,
EXPERT SAYS

DEATH CAUSES LONELINESS,
FEELINGS OF ISOLATION

III

Inspired Gibberish